

## Using Signals and Cues, Hope Inc.

### Signals and cues: Early communication begins with signals and cues.

Your child may already produce signals or cues to convey a message. They may tap the table for more eat or look in a direction of a toy to indicate they want it. They may cry when they are upset or to protest something. When a child uses a signal/cue, it is important to respond to it (give them what they want). It is also important for you to begin to use the same signal/cue back to them to indicate the same thing. As the child understanding increases, then you can move to shaping the signal/cue to a higher form or more easily understood form of communication (see co-active/tactile sign). If you are not sure what the child signal/cue is, then establish a routine over time and once they begin to be familiar with the routine, pause and see what the child does. Take any response from them as their signal for that activity to begin. If there is still no signal, or if the child's signal is difficult for you to use (such as spitting out food for no more food), then you yourself may need to develop specific signals and cues to relay information to the child. Your signal should involve the consistent use of touch (including touch cues/objects cues), smell, taste, auditory, and/or visual cues. In some cases the signal/cue may be similar to the sign used for this activity, and in this case the sign may be used and produced co-actively. You can produce signals/cues for what the child is engaged in (produce signal/cue on their body) or for what you are doing (produce signal/cue on your body). For example child is eating, take child's hand to mouth and co-actively produce the sign. If you are eating, take the child's hand to your mouth and produce the signal/cue on your body (child's hand is brought to your mouth and motion of eating is made). Use of daily activities and routines are stressed as they provide for multiple practice opportunities and occur in the natural environment. Everyone involved in the child's care and treatment should use the same signals and cues for the same thing to ensure consistency. Use of the communication consistency form is intended to be a tool to ensure all staff are aware of what forms of communication have been agreed upon. A model for using signal and cues is described as follows: **Use appropriate signals and cues to convey the following:**

1. Who you are-would be good to first alert the child to your presence by gently touching them on the back then assist them in touching your designated attribute (name cue) to know who you are-for most staff is a bracelet but can be something else that makes you unique such as a ring or long hair or fingernails, as long as it is unique to you.
2. What is about to happen next-generally use an object cue
3. Gently guide your child through the entire activity
4. Use of appropriate signals and cues for that activity-select only a few, such as eat and more during mealtime
5. When you are done-finish sign
6. What is next-generally an object cue

The information in the DVD's is set up in a similar fashion, addressing particular skill, providing activities where this skill might be addressed, providing possible signals and cues to use during these activities, and provide a demonstration. Helpful tips are also provided in the DVD's.

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Provided below is a list of skills and activities where this is demonstrated, along with possible corresponding signals and cues that could be used during these activities. You first go with what the child is using as a signal/cue. If the child does not have one of their own or the one they use is not feasible, then other cues can also be used as deemed appropriate. Provided below are some suggestions for signals in cues provided in the DVD.

**Begin with Introduction tape (topic 1-4):**

**(60 minutes)**

<b>Skill: (5)</b>	<b>Anticipation – steps: (30 minutes)</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Indicate what will happen next</li> <li>• Keep the same basic sequence</li> <li>• Pause</li> <li>• Respond</li> </ul>
<b>Activity:</b>	<b>Getting up and playing:</b>
Getting up	Child's cue: <span style="float: right;">Or</span> two taps behind the elbow
Bounce	Child's cue: <span style="float: right;">Or</span> Take child hands and jump up and down <span style="float: right;">Or</span> Press up and down on child's legs
Rock	Child's cue: <span style="float: right;">Or</span> Stand/sit behind child and engage in rocking motion
Dance	Childs' cue: <span style="float: right;">Or</span> Swing child's hands back and forth or side to side
Hug	Child's cue: <span style="float: right;">Or</span> Engage in a hug
I love you	Child's cue: <span style="float: right;">Or</span> Encourage close face contact/kiss
Name sign for child	Child's cue: <span style="float: right;">Or</span> Hand tapping chest <span style="float: right;">Or</span> If older child their name sign
Name sign/cues for others	Mom Dad Siblings Grandparent Teacher/Therapist(s) Intervener <b>Tip:</b> play a game in a circle and have child go from person to person and introduce signal/cue. Encourage child to feel each person's face/hair.
<b>Skill: (6)</b>	<b>Developing an awareness of the child's signals and cues. (30 minutes)</b>
<b>Activity:</b>	<b>Toileting/bathing:</b>
Changing diaper	Child's cue: <span style="float: right;">Or</span> Tap diaper
Toileting	Child's cue: <span style="float: right;">Or</span> Tap diaper and place hand on toilet <span style="float: right;">Or</span> As child learns this can then co-actively shape "t" sign and tap diaper with this hand

Bath	Child's cue: Rub child's arm on their chest-same as co-active sign	Or
Wash face	Child's cue: Rub child's hand on their face-same as co-active sign	Or
Brush teeth	Child's cue: Co-active sign for brush teeth	Or
Hot	Child's cue: Co-active sign for hot	Or
Cold	Child's cue: Bring child's arm to chest and shake as if shivering <b>Tip:</b> When teaching hot/cold. Have a container of hot drink and a container of cold drink and explore both while providing the corresponding cue.	Or
<b>Skill: (7)</b>	<b>Responding to the child's signals and cues</b>	<b>(30 minutes)</b>
<b>Activity:</b>	<b>Eating/feeding:</b>	
Eat	Child's cue: Co-active sign eat	Or
Drink	Child's cue: Co-active sign for drink	Or
Finished	Child's cue: Push item away Co-active sign for finished	Or Or
More	Child's cue: Co-active sign for more	Or
Want	Child's cue: Bring child's hands to chest as of taking something Wiggle fingers Co-active sign for want	Or Or Or
Stand	Child's cue: Lightly pressing up on child's elbows or ribcage or bring arms up	Or
Sit	Child's cue: Lightly pressing down on child's shoulders or lightly tug on arm downward <b>Tip:</b> You can make a game out of sit and stand to reinforce the concept	Or
Food	Child's cue: Pair actual food item with the signal for eat	Or
<b>Skill: (8)</b>	<b>Turn taking – steps</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Engage in activity that child enjoys (i.e. blowing bubbles, playing a peek a boo game,, engaging in an action game such as patty cake, jumping, head shake, finger plays, etc.</li> <li>Pause and wait for child to take a turn (10 seconds)-let them know it is their turn</li> <li>Respond to child's initiation of the activity and pause again. May need to shape response into more appropriate response.</li> <li>If no response, help the child take a turn</li> </ul>	<b>(30 minutes)</b>
<b>Activity:</b>	<b>Waking up, going to bed, and dressing:</b>	
Wake up	Child cues: Morning routine: can include shake crib, touch hand, sing song, etc. <b>Tip:</b> this may be a good time for finger plays	Or
Up	Child's cue: Two taps behind the elbow	Or
Down	Child's cue: Lightly press child's shoulders down	Or
Put clothes on	Child's cues:	Or

	Put clothes over chest/legs, and then rub child's arm or legs and rub corresponding body part	
Take clothes off	Child's cues: Tug at child's shirt, pants, shoes, or socks	Or
Time for bed	Child's cue: Nighttime routine: Co-active sign for bed or place hand on side of face, sing song Tip: this may be a good time for finger plays	Or
Lie down	Child's cue: On front-rub front and use cue for down On back-rub back and use cue for down ON side-rub side and use cue for down	Or
<b>Skill: (9)</b>	<b>Making choices-food items and play activities are good to use. Give 2 choices at a time initially. (30 minutes)</b>	
<b>Activity:</b>	<b>Playing and Actions</b>	
Give it to me/let go	Child's cue: Take object in child's hand and have them drop it in yours Take object in child's hand and shake it so it drops in your hands	Or Or
Take it	Child's cue: Put it in their hand and help them move hand toward them	Or
Hold it	Child's cue: Put object in child's hand and squeeze it	Or
Take it out/put it in	Child's cues: Help the child push item in and take out of a container. Container may have sound effect when dropped or have a cloth around it's center so child's feels it Co-active sign in and out	Or Or
Very good	Child's cues: Help child clap hands	Or
	<b>Therapy words/activities: Pair objects with activities when possible</b>	
Roll over	Child's cues: Child is lying down and you tap their shoulder and butt in direction you want	Or
Move	Child's cue: Pat child's butt or side	Or
Crawl	Child's cue: Put child in correction position and pat arm/legs	Or
	<b>Action words</b>	
Open and close	Child's cue: Help child open and shut several contains and doors.	Or
Push and pull	Child's cue: Co-active sign for push and pull	Or
Walk	Child's cue: Tap back of child's legs Stand child on your feet and walk	Or Or
Throw	Child's cue: Put object in child's hand and throw it Co-active sign for throw	Or
<b>Skill: (10)</b>	<b>Using Co-Active Sign (30 minutes)</b>	
<b>Activity:</b>	<b>Pacing and calming</b>	
Down	Child's cue: Press child's shoulders down Tip: Prepare ahead, by arranging the spot and activity to be available	Or
You are here	Child's cue: Let child feel something to know where they are Tip: Be consistent in using same place for ADL's, Keep room arranged the same way, and provide a different seating arrangement in different rooms, i.e. highchair	Or

	in the kitchen, recliner in the TV room, and wedge in the bedroom.	
Wait	Child's cue: Press one hand on top of another Co-active sign for wait Tip: Talk to your child while you wait	Or Or Or
Stop	Child's cue: Gently hold particular body part, come from behind and hold Co active sign for stop Tip: If child is older, may want to reprimand from the back and show affection from the front.	Or Or
Yes/no	Child's cue: Corresponding headshake which child must feel if no vision Co-active sign	Or
Calm down	Child's cue: Hold child tight and affectionately and stroke arm(back for reprimand and front for affection)	Or
Massage	Child's cue: Rub shoulders and other body parts or use objects (blanket) and/or smell (lotion) Tip: Lay in same spot with music	Or
Skill: (11)	Enriching Activities	(30 minutes)
Activity	Emotions	
It hurts	Child's cue: Put band aid on spot that hurts Rub spot that hurts If not spot, then rub child's stomach	Or
Take medication	Child's cue: Touch mouth (if it goes in the mouth) + object cue Co-active sign for medicine + touch mouth+ object cue and smell Touch feeding tube (if it goes in this) + object cue	Or Or Or
Get a shot	Child's cue: Tap location of where shot is given with your index finger + object	Or
Sad/crying	Child's cue: Comfort Co-active sign for sad	Or Or
Happy/laugh	Child's cue: Grab both hands and act excited Co-active sign for happy	Or Or
Frustrated/mad	Child's cue: Grab both hands and shake as if frustrated Co-active sign for mad (can be modified to tapping nose)	Or Or
Scared/Afraid	Child's cue: Grab both hands and scrunch them together	Or
	Senses:	
Watch/look at	Child's cue: Grab hands and move them away from face and toward object For no vision-take hands and place on object	Or Or
Look for/find	Child's cue: For no vision-take hands and place on table and encourage finding it	Or
Listen to	Child's cue: Take hand and tap ear Co-active sign for listen	Or Or
Music	Child's cue: Grab both hands and sway in front of child Co-active sign for music	Or Or
Smell	Child's cue:	Or

	Tap child on nose Co-active sign for smell	Or
Feel	Child's cue: Put hands on object and encourage feeling it Co-active sign for feel/touch	Or Or
<b>Skill: (12)</b>	<b>Active Communication</b>	<b>(30 minutes)</b>
<b>Activity/words:</b>	<b>Going Somewhere</b>	
Go	Child's cue: Take child's arm and point in direction to go + object Co-active sign for go + object cue	Or Or
Bye	Child's cue: Co-active sign for bye	Or
Hi	Child's cue: Co-active sign for hi + name sign	Or
Come	Child's cue: Tap child behind shoulders to encourage movement toward you Pull both of child's arms toward you Co-active sign for come	Or Or Or
Faster	Child's cue: Demonstrate going faster with activity you are doing	Or
Slower	Child's cue: Demonstrate going slower with the activity you are doing	Or
	Child's cue:	Or

### **Additional Information:**

#### **Signals and Cues:**

**You can encourage the child to produce these tactile signals and cues back to you by providing a prompt at the elbow or hand. You can use signals/cues for what the child is doing (produce the signal/cue on their body) or for what you are doing (produce signal cue on your own body).**

#### **Three strategies to motivate your child to communicate:**

- 1. Create situations where they need to ask for help through use of delay/pauses. Key vocabulary includes help, more, protest.**
- 2. Increase sensory rich environment (vision, hearing, smell, taste, etc.)**
- 3. Use a variety of activities to keep it interesting.**